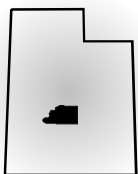


County Trends



Sevier

March 2003

A Local Economic Perspective

Growth is Good—Even When Circumspect

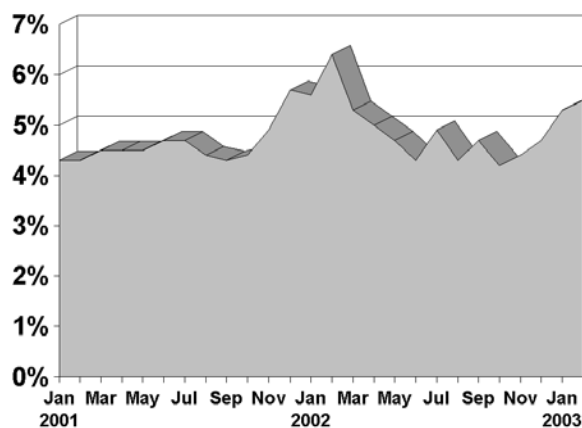
Sevier County's economy has become mired in a limbo-land where its employment growth continues, but at a minimal rate. However, other indicators have improved in recent quarters.

Jobs growth chugging along

Employment growth in Sevier County proved rather nondescript during the third quarter of 2002 (the most current data available). In September 2002, expansion measured only 1 percent in comparison with the previous year—an addition of less than 60 positions. However, remember both the state and the nation have experienced employment declines for many months. In a recessionary period, any employment expansion is welcome.

No clear pattern emerged from the individual industry's performance. Many industries suffered job losses, but many other industries added positions. Recession-sensitive manufacturing experienced some of the largest employment declines. But, it was joined in the job-losing category by construction, retail trade, the federal government and accommodation/food services.

Seasonally Adjusted Sevier County Unemployment Rates

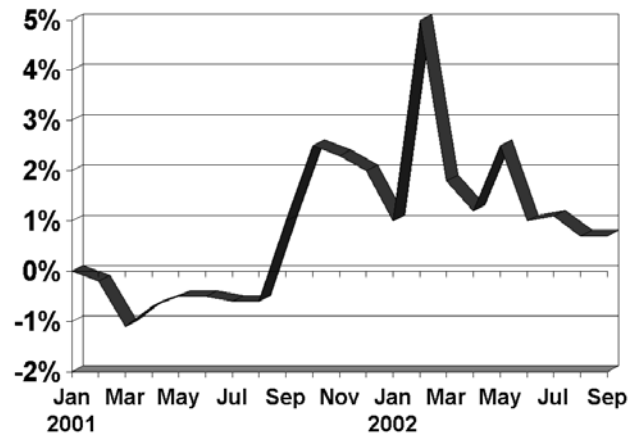


Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.





Year-Over Change in Sevier County Employment



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

To the Point

Employment growth remains rather lackluster in Sevier County. However, compared to the national and state job losses of recent months, the county appears prosperous. In addition, strong construction and sales performances suggest the county's economy improving.

Trucking and warehousing generated the most significant employment gains—almost 100 positions. In addition, mining, state government, private health care/social services, and finance/insurance industries all contributed their fair share to the employment gain.

(If you still aren't familiar with these new "NAICS" industry groupings, you aren't alone! Check out this website: <http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Naics/dwsdefault.asp>)

During the first part of 2003, joblessness did start to drift upwards (unemployment rate estimates are available earlier than employment figures). Sevier County's February 2003 unemployment rate measured 5.5 percent—midway between the state and national figures. Even though the rates have ticked up in recent months, they remain below year-ago figures which spiked after a plant closure.

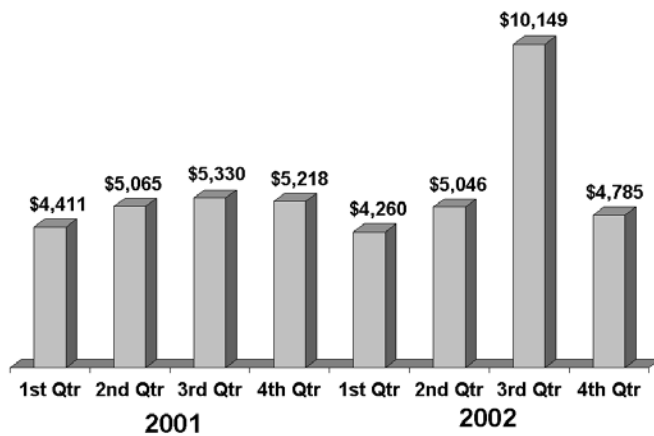
Construction basically unchanged

Although values in the final quarter dipped by about 8 percent, overall, 2002 provided an economic success for construction permitting. Compared to the previous year, construction permitting was up 21 percent. Both nonresidential and residential permitting shared in this building glory. The number of new dwelling unit permits rose by 53 percent accompanied by a 23-percent rise in values.

Nonresidential permitting notched up its values by almost 40 percent. The authorization of a motel and

Total Sevier County Approved Construction Values

3



Source: Utah Bureau of Economic & Business Research.

church during the third quarter of 2002 helped keep nonresidential construction healthy.

Sales Moderate

Sales provided another positive economic indicator. Sevier County's gross taxable sales actually declined for much of 2000 and 2001. The third quarter year-to-year sales increase—higher than 6 percent—is the indicator's best performance in years. Moreover, sales in wholesale trade, retail trade, and services all showed strong-to-moderate gains.

Looking Forward

Although the nation was on the track to recovery, current war fears seem to be derailing the economy. Since economics is based on human behavior rather than science, fears of a downturn often disintegrate into self-fulfilling prophecies. A quick war with Iraq would do much to prop-up consumer confidence and improve the national, state, and local economy. Otherwise, Sevier County's economy may face challenges in the months ahead.

Lecia Parks Langston, Regional Economist
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Quick Facts

February 2003

Unemployment Rate

Sevier County	5.5%
Utah	5.3%
U.S.	5.8%

Sept 2002 Change from Previous Year

Job Growth

Sevier County	0.7%
Utah	-0.9%
U.S.	-0.7%

4th Qtr 2002 Change from Previous Year

Construction Values

Sevier County	-8.3%
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3rd Qtr 2002 Change from Previous Year

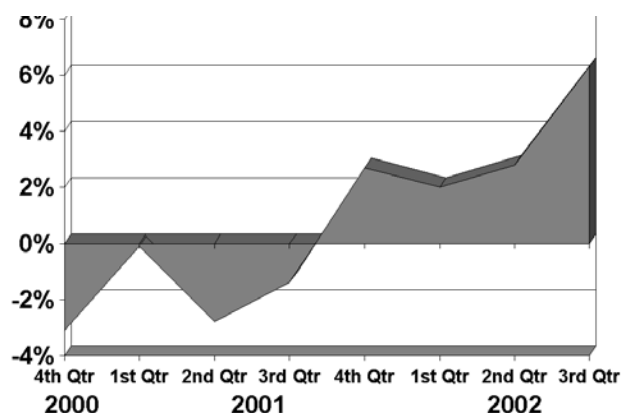
Sales

Sevier County	6.3%
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Source: Utah Dept of Workforce Services,
 Bureau of Labor Statistics,
 Utah Tax Commission,
 Bureau of Econ & Business Research.

For more economic information about Sevier County see:
<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/regions/county.asp>

Year-Over Change in Sevier County Gross Taxable Sales



Source: Utah Tax Commission.

The mission of the Utah Department of Workforce Services is to provide quality, accessible, and comprehensive employment-related and supportive services responsive to the needs of employers, job seekers, and the community.

What's Up? ⁴

- The Richfield City Administration Building will be expanded to provide additional space for the Police Department. A \$300,000 grant and a \$750,000 loan from the Utah Permanent Community Impact Board will be used for this and other projects.
- Sevier County's new half-million-dollar animal shelter has opened in Salina. The shelter is near Interstate 15 between Aurora and Sigurd.

For more economic events, see:

<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Regions/western/sevier/sevieree.pdf>



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Equal Opportunity Employment Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Call (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call the state relay at 1-800-346-4128



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